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BUONAPARTE

IN

E G Y P T:

OR,

AN APPENDIX

TO THE ENQUIRY INTO HIS SUPPOSED
EXPEDITION TO THE EAST.

Tamerlane. The world! 'twould be too little for thy pride.
Thou would'st scale Heaven.—

Bajazet. I would!— ROWE'S TAMERLANE.

By EYLES IRWIN, Esq.

DUBLIN:

PRINTED; LONDON, REPRINTED FOR G. NICOL,
FALL-MALL.

1798.

BLOOMSBURY

EGYPT

TO THE ENQUIRY INTO HIS SUPPOSED

EXPEDITION TO THE EAST

THE WORLD WOULD BE TOO SMALL FOR THE PRIDE
THAT WOULD BE TAKEN IN IT
HOW'S TAMERLAIN

BY WILLIAM HAMILTON, ESQ.

DUBLIN

PRINTED: LONDON: PRINTED FOR A. MILLAR, IN ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD

1798

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body of Proprietors discovered these repul-
sites in you at the last general election; and
JOHN HUDLESTON, Esq.
with an encouragement, to persevere in
so laudable a pursuit is to the object

in view. Hannibal is at our gates! and if
DEAR SIR,
private friendships and resentments are not

**My first essay on this subject was ad-
dressed to a very old and meritorious Di-
rector of the East India Company; permit
me to send the present into the world under
the countenance of a name, which I enter-
tained the most sanguine hopes, would have
been added to the list.**

**This is no season for compliment, and I
should blush at my own baseness, if I gave
a suffrage or recommendation to a man, not
duly qualified by integrity as well as talent
for the arduous situation of the Direction.
All the wisdom, local knowledge, and energy
of the service are become necessary for its
salvation. A respectable and independent**

body of Proprietors discovered these requisites in you at the last general election ; and, with such encouragement, to persevere in so laudable a pursuit, is to attain the object in view. Hannibal is at our gates ! and if private friendships and resentments are not alike sacrificed at the shrine of public duty, the Capitol is lost ; and we may in vain lament, that our interests have been the victim of idle punctilio and pernicious servility.

While you peruse these sheets your conviction of the truths they convey, will do justice to their design. To sound the alarm is no contemptible office, when the means of security are in our hands.

With every sentiment of esteem, permit me to subscribe myself, dear SIR,

Your affectionate friend,

EYLES IRWIN.

Dublin,
24th Sept. 1798.

long before his views were manifested, or a
British fleet was sent to oppose them.

“ But amid this night of anarchy and fear,

This storm of evil may appear ;

ADVERTISEMENT.

This storm, eye, that eastward forcible draws,

To leave in Europe's miseries—a pause.

I by navy, Venice! and thy latent claims,

Suffice to wrap the Turkish realm in flames.

THAT the indulgence shewn to an offence
is a kind of sanction to its repetition, is no
new discovery. Not that the curiosity ex-
cited by the Enquiry into Buonaparte's ex-
pedition, is the sole motive for the present
intrusion on the Public. The mask of the
Republican General has been thrown aside ;
and he, that proves himself equal to the
most daring and unwarrantable attempts,
should be encountered with his own arms.
I will not anticipate the argument of this
Appendix, but I cannot conclude without
quoting the extraordinary precision, with
which Buonaparte's enterprise was predicted
in a poem published in Dublin last year, but
neglected, as poetry generally is in that city,

long before his views were manifested, or a British fleet was sent to oppose them.

“ But 'mid this night of anarchy and fear,
This storm disast'rous! see the dawn appear ;
This *Brenus*' eye, that eastward forceful draws,
To leave in Europe's miseries—a pause.

Thy navy, Venice ! and thy latent claims,
Suffice to wrap the Turkish realm in flames.

E'en she, the *Parte*, may tremble tho' sublime !
And Egypt curse her harvests,—Greece, her clime,
Which tempt these robbers, from their country far,
To plague mankind with perfidy and war :

Or, from the isle of beauty and the grape,

Atchieve the *Prophet's* Eden, by a rape !”

Again :

“ How soon her spoils Ambition would forbear,
One squadron to the Turk could Britain spare,
Whose conquering fleets”——

Mock Heroic Epistle to Citizen Camperas.

BUONAPARTE

IN

EGYPT, &c.

AT this awful crisis, when the conjectures of wisdom and the fears of folly are equally uncertain; when experience lends no clue to inquiry, nor probability to events, that dazzle us with their novelty and astound us with their importance, the hand which is stretched forth to conduct us through the maze, has some claim to indulgence; however unequal to the task of developing inconsistency, or ascertaining the flights of ambition.

In the little essay which I offered to the public on the subject of Buonaparte, we left this adventurer on his supposed voyage

to Alexandria ; and however such an undertaking might savour of rashness, it appears that he has reached his port in safety; unimpeded by the pursuit of a British squadron, and unintimidated by the natural and artificial obstacles that must present themselves to the conquest of Egypt. Nay, we are assured, that he has not only effected a landing, but made himself master of the capital and the keys of the Delta ; and that he either has embarked, or had it in contemplation to embark, at Suez for India. Of some part of this relation I have no doubt,—from the rest I may be allowed to withhold my belief. Though of all countries Lower Egypt appears to me the most difficult to penetrate, no alternative offering but sand or swamp, the Desert on one hand, and rice fields, overflowed at this season by the Nile, on the other : either the good fortune of Buonaparte, or his inscrutable decrees, who may have fixed on this warrior as a scourge of the nations ! has

so far favoured his designs as to put him in possession of Grand Cairo. How far he will be able to maintain this post, after his acknowledged losses in the field, and his indispensable detachments to defend Alexandria, Rosetta, and Damietta, should these ports have been secured, is another question, that, in its discussion, may open new prospects, and throw new lights on this extraordinary enterprise.

And here the fate of a similar expedition, incited by similar motives, must occur to the reader—the crusade into Egypt under St. Lewis of France! The rage of that day was to recover the holy places and to Christianize the infidels! and what is the present but a crusade, to rob the Turks of a rich acquisition, and to revolutionize a servile and mixed race of Mahometans and Copts? St. Lewis failed, to the great happiness of his country, in his superstitious adventure; the success of Buonaparte is not more likely to contribute to the power or commerce of democratic France.

III If we turn to the ingenious and elegant Savary, whose travels convey no less amusement than instruction, we find that St. Lewis reached the mouth of the Nile with a fleet of 1,800 sail of transports and ships of war. The force contained in such an armament must, at least, have exceeded four times the numbers of Buonaparte's army. Damietta, the key of the eastern branch of the Nile, though strongly fortified and garrisoned, was taken by assault, and with little loss to the victors; and a circumstance favoured their march to Cairo, which was wanting, and has proved the chief obstacle, to Buonaparte. The French monarch arrived early in June, before the inundation and when the Nile was at the lowest; the General, when the inundation had probably taken place, and the Delta was a sheet of water.

III One false step lost all these advantages to St. Lewis; and a similar one may blast the ripening projects of Buonaparte. The king waited unluckily for a reinforcement under

the Count of Poitiers. The Republican General, from the comparative smallness of his force and the losses it must have sustained, must of necessity wait for supplies to preserve his new acquisitions. To open a communication with the sea, such detachments must be made from his main army as to reduce it, in my idea, to 10,000 men at utmost! We will admit them to be lions,—but they are lions in the toils; surrounded by as brave and persevering hunters, in the hovering hordes of Arabs, as ever attacked the king of beasts in the neighbouring deserts.

At Mansura, not a fourth part of the road to the capital, St. Lewis was first endangered and his career terminated. The new sultan, Touran Shah, displayed as much skill as courage in his unceasing attacks on the French camp, which was defended with the most heroic spirit and constancy: but the destruction of their cavalry exposed their lines to the Arab horse, and the capture of their fleet of boats cut off all

hope of succour. In this extremity they endeavoured to fight back their way to Damietta ; but at Farescour, about half the distance, after exhibiting prodigies of valour, St. Lewis and the remains of his army, amounting to 10,000 men, were obliged to surrender themselves prisoners of war ; and to relinquish, on the part of France, all further attempts on Egypt, till that now on foot under the auspices of Buonaparte.

In this comparison many circumstances may appear to favour the present undertaking. Besides the rapid advantages he has gained, in possessing himself of the head and extremities of the kingdom, we hear of no warlike chief or regular force to enter the lists with the conqueror of Italy and his followers. Ali Bey is no more, and the famous Hassan, Captain Pacha, it may be presumed, strangled or deposed by the ruinous policy of the Porte. But all human performance is limited, and it is not from the external appearance that we are always to estimate the stability of the edifice. Without horse, his

infantry can never move in the Desert, unharassed and uncrippled by the Arabian cavalry; and if the Pacha and Beys have secured the boats of the river, as it was easy for them to do in Upper Egypt, how to replenish the magazines of Cairo from the Delta, will be a difficulty worthy of his address. The improbability of his keeping his position, without large reinforcements from France, and the impossibility of his proceeding to India, which is still rumoured to be his destination, without transports and a sufficient convoy, are the points yet to be investigated, and, in truth, the principal design of this Appendix.

If human opinions were not often too fallible, the reader might have been spared the trouble in which he is engaged. The pursuit of the French armament was too hot, and the space it occupied in the Mediterranean too extensive, to admit the idea of its total evasion of the British squadron. That a proper judgment was formed of the slow progress of that armament, the arrival

of Nelson at Alexandria near a week before it, is an unquestionable proof. How, in so confined a scene of action, and a corner of the Mediterranean, one fleet could overrun another of such magnitude? and why the British Admiral remained so short a time at a port, to which common fame and France herself had destined the enemy, can only be matter of surmise to those out of the secret? But as the name of Nelson justly awakened expectation of some glorious event; and as I would never willingly annex aught, but approbation to his services, the only mode of accounting for this disaster, for such it must be termed, is by the false intelligence which Buonaparte threw into his way, both on the sea and at the port of Alexandria. In any less established character I should be tempted to think, that this ardour and rapidity rather savoured of the heedless velocity of the greyhound, than the sober sagacity of the beagle.

But the game is yet afoot, and, I trust

that Nelson will be in at the death. Fame left him in chase of a new fleet, and on his return to Egypt. Though in the first instance, some fatality has deprived him of the Alpine laurels of Buonaparte, it may yet be reserved for the intrepid Briton, to repair the misfortune ; and by intercepting the expected fleets, and destroying *that* which he missed, to reduce his adventurous rival to distress, despair, and submission ! * Pompey evaded the pursuit of Cæsar, and reached Egypt in safety. But he was betrayed at Pelusium. The faith of the mo-

* Since these sheets went to the press, intelligence came, *via Paris*, of the total defeat of the French fleet by Nelson, on the coast of Africa ! May the naval hero redeem thus gloriously any mistakes incident to humanity, and continue to fulfil the predictions of no servile encomiast.

The moment this Pamphlet came by post from Dublin, to be reprinted in London, the particulars of the fulfilment of the Author's warmest wishes and predictions arrived from Sir Horatio Nelson, giving an account of the total destruction of the Egyptian Armada ;

dern, will, at least, equal that of the ancient Egyptians ; and should any of the chiefs, or lower classes have joined, according to report, the Republican standard, depend on it, their friendship is hollow, and their falsehood, substantial. The prejudices and bigotry of Musselmen are invincible. Their hatred to the European name, and the Christian religion, is so notorious and malignant, that no motive, but fear, could have induced their submission to the French ; and no occasion will be lost to break vows, entered into with reservation, and kept with impatience.

Is Egypt then likely to be the prison or the grave of Buonaparte and his army ? With a smaller force, Alexander set out on his conquest of the world ! And who can dive into the unfathomable views of this warrior and politician ? Egypt might have been the which renders the conveyance of the supplies to Buonaparte, the necessity of which the Author, with his great knowledge of the country, so clearly points out, absolutely impossible.—*Publisher.*

first theatre, on which he wished, not only to exhibit his valour and talents to the Eastern hemisphere, but, like the Macedonian hero, to claim alliance with the gods. The supposed temple of Jupiter Ammon is in the neighbourhood of Alexandria ; and a visit to that oracle on a similar errand, would not surely be less in character with the ambition and morality of the French General, than the institution of the worship of Ceres at Paris, and the revived system of Paganism, with regenerated France ! *

This research is foreign to our purpose, however it might serve to surprise or amuse mankind. Great events are on the eve of disclosure. Never since the memorable times, when Rome and Carthage contended for superiority, and the empire of

* Mr. Tone, who came with the French to Killala Bay, gave a friend of mine a curious description of the Feast of Ceres lately instituted in France ; where the peasants hung wreaths about her statue, and adored it, as of old !

the world was decided by the Triumvirs in these seas, have such formidable fleets appeared in opposition, or such a prize been at issue : A prize, beyond conquest or fame, in which the peace of Europe is involved !

As to India, it would appear secure by nature and art from the effects of this irruption. The storm must spend itself at a distance from that favoured and secluded region, if the Commander of his Majesty's fleet, and the Governors of the Company's settlements, but barely perform their duty. No French ship of the line, and but a few frigates, are in the Indian seas ; and where transports and a convoy are to be found for Buonaparte and his troops (for to act as a Greek mercenary, or put himself, with a small force, into the power of an Eastern despot, is neither suitable to the policy of the *Great Nation*,* nor the pride of her Ge-

* Vide Report of the Secret Committees of the Irish Parliament on the nature of the assistance the Directory would afford to Ireland.

neral) would pose the most ingenious of the French projectors—the flighty inventor of the balloon and raft ! By the most authentic accounts the Isles of France have been blocked up by our cruizers for this year past ; and no shipping—if shipping there be in a place deprived of its trade—could get out, without observation. From Batavia, indeed, a quantity of tonnage might have been procured some years ago ; but the bottoms of vessels so long lying on the mud, must be worm-eaten and rotten, and no assistance could be thence obtained of that kind. But, admitting, that the conquest and care of the Eastern isles had so totally occupied the King's ships, as to make them overlook the safety of the Peninsula, to which the recent capture of the two Indiamen in Tillicherry Road gives some colour of supposition—how could vessels, sufficient for the purpose, have stolen out of the ports of Tippoo Saib, the reputed and dernier resource of the French, without the

knowledge of the Company's cruizers (some of which are usually in the Arabian and Persian gulfs), and of the Presidency of Bombay? The winter months must be the period of their departure from the coast of Malabar; for during the other nine months of the year, the N. W. wind prevails in the Red Sea, and renders inevitable, the loss of the passage to Suez.* I admit, that the two Indiamen might have been captured for transports; but they cannot yet have reached their destination. And such are the impediments to be overcome to carry the project into execution, that the Company's naval force alone, in their Indiamen and ships of war, as they protected their trade in the Straits of Sunda in 1794, might easily defeat it either at Suez, Mocha, or the Straits of Babelmandel.†

A short exposition of the matter will be the

* Vide Bruce, Niebuhr, &c.

† By the same channel, which brought the intelli-

best received. I do not mean to criminate ; but I would wish to dispel doubt and dependency in those peculiarly interested in the event. I am happy to find that India stock preserves its value ; for I am confident, and I am a stock-holder, that this romantic enterprize, though of a bold and impressive cast, will rather serve by its failure, to give stability to public opinion, than endanger the smallest dependency of the Company's empire, or injure their revenue or commerce. If they are to fall, it must be by negligence unexampled, or by treachery unavoidable. A false security at home may prove equally fatal.

We are arrived at times, when probabilities are no longer to be weighed, but measures to be adopted against seeming impossibilities. Buonaparte's appearance in Egypt, we learn of an English packet being at Suez, waiting for dispatches. Does this look like the French having any force in the Red Sea ?

Egypt has put calculation to the blush ; and his reaching the coast of India, is only wanting to make us dubious of every thing, but the success of these marauders, in the breach of all faith, and the contempt of all rule and experience ! Let the Company, let the Nation, be aware of the catastrophe. Though the present moment be unfavourable to him, Buonaparte may so far succeed in his views, as to establish himself in Egypt. If the plague spare what his prowess and military genius may preserve from the sword, a year or two may produce a revolution at sea, to enable him to build and collect vessels for his projected expedition. An Admiral, whom I am proud to call my friend, has been long appointed to the Indian station. What delays the sailing of Sir John Colpoys ? and why are his local knowledge and enterprising talents so long withheld from the threatened scene of action ? If a pass be once made over the Gulf that separates Egypt and India, by the un-

daunted perseverance of Buonaparte, the charm will be dissolved, and our possessions contested. No less fatal will it prove to the British grandeur, than the bridge which Satan threw over Chaos, to mankind, where

“ Sin and Death amain

Following his track, such was the will of Heaven,
Pav'd after him a broad and beaten way

Over the dark abyss.”

MILTON.

FINIS.

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 Paved after him a broad and beaten way.
 Over the dark abyss Milton